

an advance-guard King ? "¹ These last words appeared to me peculiarly appropriate in the mouth of Murat, who had always served in the advance-guard of our armies, and I thought expressed in a very happy manner the similarity of his situation as a king and a soldier.

I walked with Murat about half an hour. In the course of our conversation he informed me that his greatest cause of complaint against the Emperor was his having first put him forward and then abandoned him. "Before I arrived in Naples/" continued he, "it was intimated to me that there was a design of assassinating me. What did I do ? I entered that city alone, in full daylight, in an open carriage, for I would rather have been assassinated at once than have lived in the constant fear of being so. I afterwards made a descent on the Isle of Capri, which succeeded. I attempted one against Sicily, and am certain it would have also been successful had the Emperor fulfilled his promise of sending the Toulon fleet to second my operations; but he issued contrary orders: *he enacted Mazarin, and wished me to play the part of the adventurous Duke of Guise.* But I see through his designs. Now that he has a son, on whom he has bestowed the title of King of Home, he merely wishes the crown of Naples to be considered as a deposit in my hands. He regards Naples as a future annexation to the Kingdom of Borne, to which I foresee it is his design to unite the whole of Italy. But let him not urge me too far, for I will oppose him, and conquer, or perish in the attempt, sword in hand."

I had the discretion not to inform Murat how correctly he had divined the plans of the Emperor and his projects as to Italy, but in regard to the Continental system, which, perhaps, the reader will be inclined to call my great stalking-horse, I spoke of it as I had done to the Prince of Sweden, and I per-

¹ The question here asked by Murat would have been answered by Napoleon in the affirmative ; and indeed a great part of the difficulties of the Emperor and of the Kings set up by him was that these Sovereigns would not recognize that this was their real position. They were the leaders of the advanced guard, or wardens of the marches, of the Empire ; and their pitiful, if natural and sometimes honorable, attempts to assume the status of independent monarchs, did much to ruin the Empire to which alone they owed their existence. If Spain, Holland, and Italy were to be independent it was not for Joseph, Louis, and Murat to head the struggle in these countries.